

# Public Health

## Our Mission

***To satisfy our customers by providing community and preventive health services that promote and improve the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of San Bernardino County residents and visitors.***

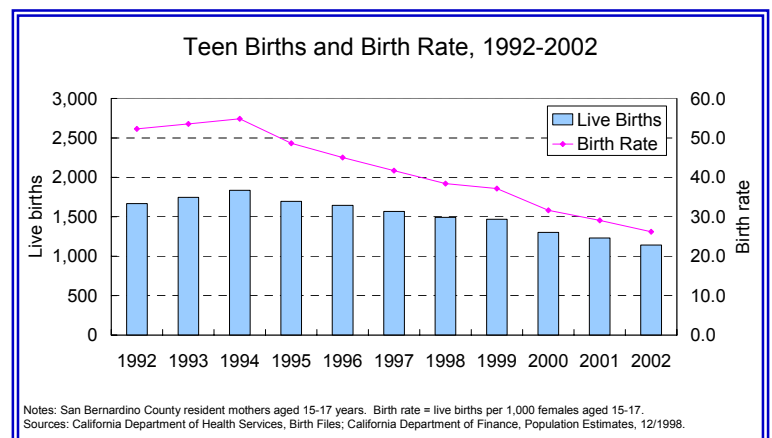
The Department of Public Health seeks to accomplish its mission by working with partners countywide to monitor health, detect and investigate health problems, develop and advocate sound public health policies, implement prevention strategies, promote healthy behaviors, foster safe and healthful environments, and provide leadership and training. By charting decisive courses of action, collecting the right information, and working closely with other health and community organizations, the Department of Public Health has been making San Bernardino County a safer and healthier place to live since 1931.

Generally, public health services are designed to:

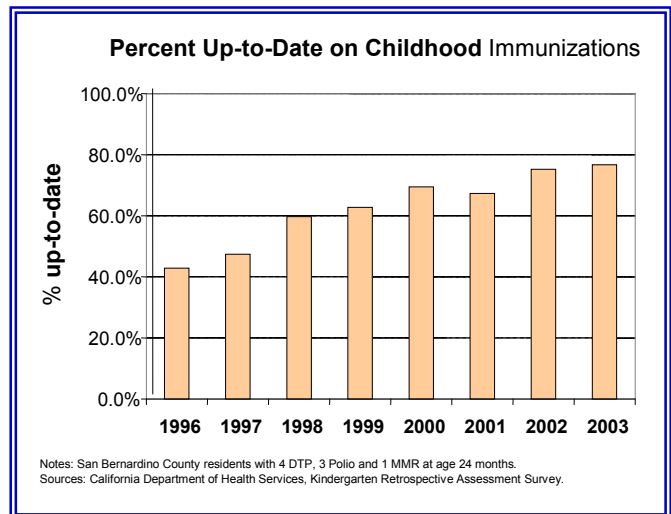
- Monitor health status to identify community health problems
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable, and
- Seek new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

## Accomplishments in 2003

- One of the most notable health accomplishments in San Bernardino County has been the decrease in the teen birth rate during the past decade. After reaching a peak in 1994, the birth rate for mothers 15 through 17 years of age decreased 52% from 1994 to 2002. The department's teen pregnancy prevention programs use diverse approaches to prevent teen pregnancy, such as linkages with vocational programs, education of male prison inmates on the economic and legal consequences of teen pregnancy, and intervention with younger siblings of pregnant teens.



- The proportion of San Bernardino County resident children who are up to date on childhood immunizations at age 24 months increased from 43% in 1996 to 77% in 2003. Since 1994, San Bernardino County has used a childhood immunization registry to improve child immunization rates. The success of the registry was highlighted in a national broadcast in 2002.



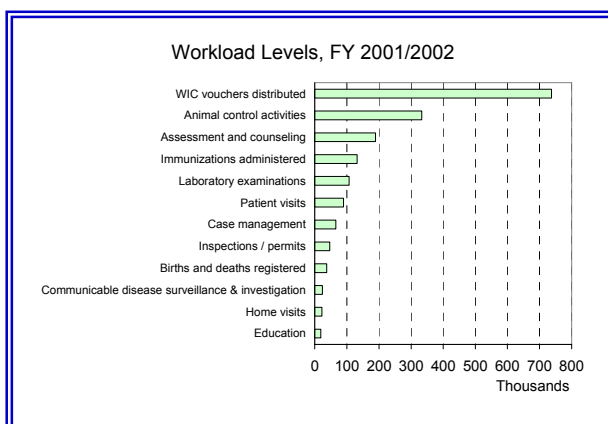
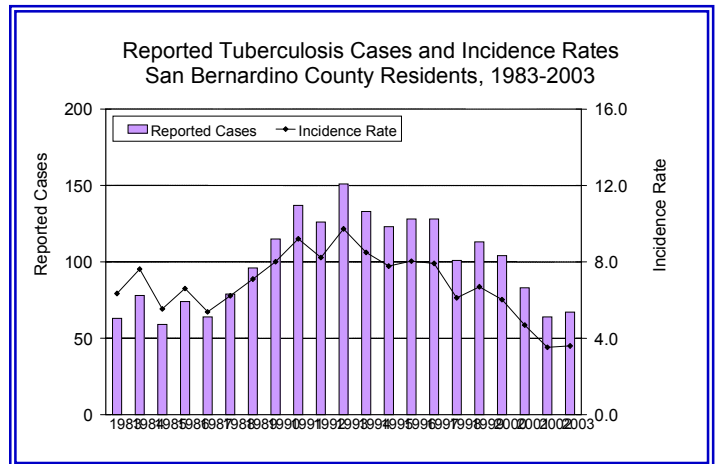
- Through the ever-growing number of Women Infant, and Children (WIC) clinics, the department provided supplemental nutrition vouchers at over 760,000 visits during 2003.
- The Immunization Registry for San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, managed by the department, has had impressive success in recruiting providers resulting in increased immunization coverage throughout the county. The number of providers increased by 51% in 2003.
- Implemented a bioterrorism and public health emergencies response plan to increase surveillance efforts and laboratory evaluation.
- Developed performance-based contracts for ambulance transportation providers.
- Implemented a health alert network to notify key community partners about bioterrorism events and other important public health events.
- 90% of maternal health clients were screened for substance abuse and counseled or referred for appropriate services when identified.
- 90% of department clients were screened for involvement in relationship violence and referred for appropriate services when identified as victims or perpetrators of relationship violence.
- Environmental Health Services conducted more than 8,500 food inspections, investigated 219 food borne illness complaints, 4,400 swimming pool inspections, and 3,300 vector control requests.
- Developed a new website for Environmental Health Services. The public and businesses can access information on food safety, water and wastewater, and vector control through the website, and can register complaints and requests for information as well.

- Developed a new website for Animal Care and Control. The public can now view animals available for adoption and lost animals and access information regarding licensing, shelter services, and field services, spay and neutering, and clinic schedules.

## **Goals for 2004**

Public Health has set the following goals for 2004:

- Continue to increase the number of medical providers in the Immunization Registry.
- Further the decline of tuberculosis cases through increased prevention and monitoring efforts.
- Develop a comprehensive program with other county and community agencies to combat obesity and heart disease.
- Continue the progress on the bioterrorism response plan to protect County citizens better in case of an attack or other public health crisis.
- Maximize enrollment of San Bernardino County Uninsured children into comprehensive health care services through the Gateway Program.
- Continue to promote the Spay and Neutering Program and decrease the euthanasia rate in County animal shelters.
- Implement a program to accept credit cards and debit cards for Environmental Health permits and fees and Animal Control licenses and fees.
- Improve the public's confidence that restaurants are operated and maintained in a sanitary condition by implementing a scoring system for all restaurants in San Bernardino County. Also, making closure information and restaurant inspection information available on the Environmental Health Services website.



## **How Outcomes are Measured**

Approaches to measuring outcomes are quite varied due to the diversity of services provided, health issues addressed, and funding source reporting requirements. In order to measure outcomes, the department utilizes more than twenty health, demographic, and programmatic data sets, such as births, deaths, hospitalizations, census, health interview surveys, and WIC. Statistical and geographic information system

software is used to assist in analyzing and reporting outcomes.

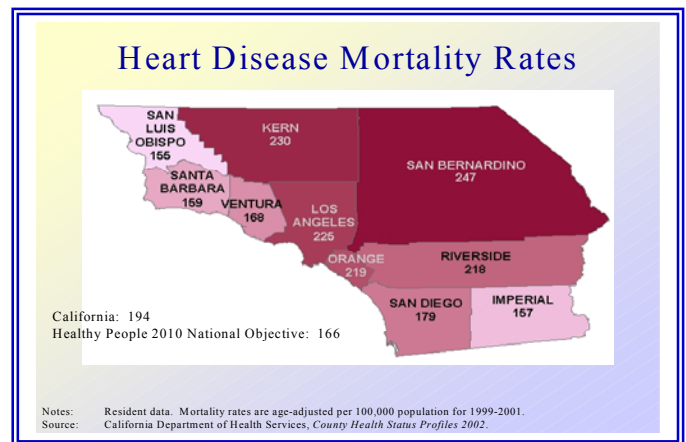
Long-term health outcomes are monitored annually. Some of these outcomes, such as heart disease mortality rates, are U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2010 objectives. Other long-term outcomes, for example birth rates for teenage mothers, are monitored because of their particular interest to the community and the department.

In addition to long term health outcomes, nearly twenty categories of process objectives are monitored. Process objectives reflect workload levels and services provided, and include vital events registered, clinic visits, immunizations administered, complaints investigated, and WIC vouchers distributed.

## **Program Information**

### **Communicable and Chronic Disease Control and Prevention**

Disease control services relate to the surveillance and prevention of illness and disease. Clinical programs providing prevention, education, diagnosis, and treatment of health issues of particular public importance include infectious disease programs such as (tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS), and a comprehensive reproductive health program. Other disease control functions include management of the county-wide immunization tracking system, provision of vital public health immunizations, and monitoring of disease patterns and occurrence.



Several programs aim to prevent or reduce the significant burden that chronic disease and cancer have on the county. Tobacco use prevention and education is an important piece of this effort as is a program working to promote healthy lifestyles through exercise and healthy eating. Traditional screening for selected gender-specific cancers is also provided through collaborative efforts with community and health care partners. The Department has optimized such activities by joining other members of the Community Health Coalition to develop strategies for combating the serious impact of Coronary Heart Disease, the leading cause of death in San Bernardino County. The county has the highest age-adjusted death rate due to coronary heart disease of all counties in California. San Bernardino County's rate of 247 (1999-2001) is far from meeting the Healthy People 2010 national objective of 166, and is 27% higher than the California rate of 194.

### **Bioterrorism and Emergency Medical Services**

As a result of a federal initiative, the Department has developed a Comprehensive Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Plan. It details strategies for working with multiple partners to improve response capabilities in the event of a bioterrorism incident or other public health emergency. One vital program that enhances the County's capacity to respond quickly to emergencies is the public health laboratory. Its Level B designation enables rapid, sophisticated testing to investigate any possible terror-related causes of illness. That responsibility covers not only San Bernardino County, but two neighboring counties as well.

The effort to vaccinate public health and healthcare workers against smallpox highlights how the Department collaborates internally and externally. Epidemiologists, nurses, and health educators have worked together to develop and conduct presentations for emergency responder agencies, hospitals, and community groups. Hundreds of potential vaccinees have been educated about smallpox disease and the vaccine. San Bernardino County had a high rate of vaccination compared to other California counties. The vaccine has successfully been administered to many public health employees and hospital staff. The campaign strengthened relationships with vital County and community partners, and further prepares the County to respond if a smallpox event occurs.

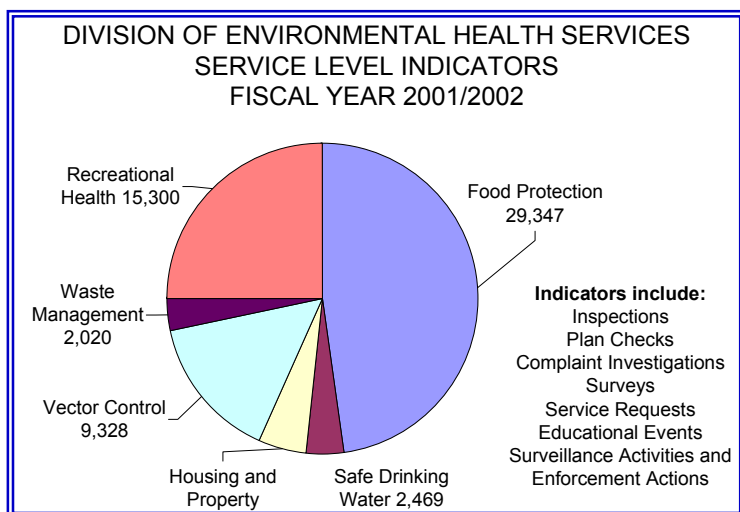
### Maternal and Child Health

Services focus on the prevention of disease or disability to maximize the potential of an individual or family unit and promote healthy outcomes in high-risk populations. Staff is dedicated to a philosophy of excellence in providing comprehensive, strength-based, client-centered services that are culturally sensitive and improve the health and well-being of children, adolescents and families in our communities. There is also a commitment to establishing and maintaining collaborative working partnerships with our communities that respect both the clients and employees.

Clinical programs providing diagnosis, treatment and education, focus on prenatal care, child health and physical/occupational therapy for children with special health care needs. Starting in FY 03-04, the Gateway program was implemented to help assure uninsured children, less than 19 years of age, a medical home for preventive and curative health services. In addition, several programs provide both home and community based services. These programs target families and youth at risk for child abuse, family violence, teen pregnancy, truancy, juvenile probation and medical neglect. In collaboration with Probation and Department of Children Services, the medical and dental health needs of children in placement are monitored to ensure compliance with child health standards.

### Environmental Health Services

The purpose of environmental health services is to prevent, eliminate or reduce hazards that could adversely affect health, safety and quality of life through an integrated and comprehensive array of programs.



Everyone who eats out is impacted by the Food Protection/Plan Review Program. It assures food provided for human consumption is of good quality, safe, free of adulteration, and properly labeled and advertised. Facility plans are reviewed to verify they are constructed according to code, and food is stored, prepared, and served under clean, safe, and sanitary conditions.

The Recreational Health Program ensures all public recreational waters and public swimming pools and spas are free of safety hazards, disease and life-threatening exposures. The Housing

Program also provides safety by inspecting for code compliance in dwellings such as multi-family units, motels/hotels, and bed and breakfasts, to promote housing free of environmental health hazards.

The regulatory activities of the Waste/Wastewater/Land Use Program protect the safety of the County's drinking waters. The Waste Management Program has a similar authority in regulating the proper storage, disposal, and transportation of solid waste.

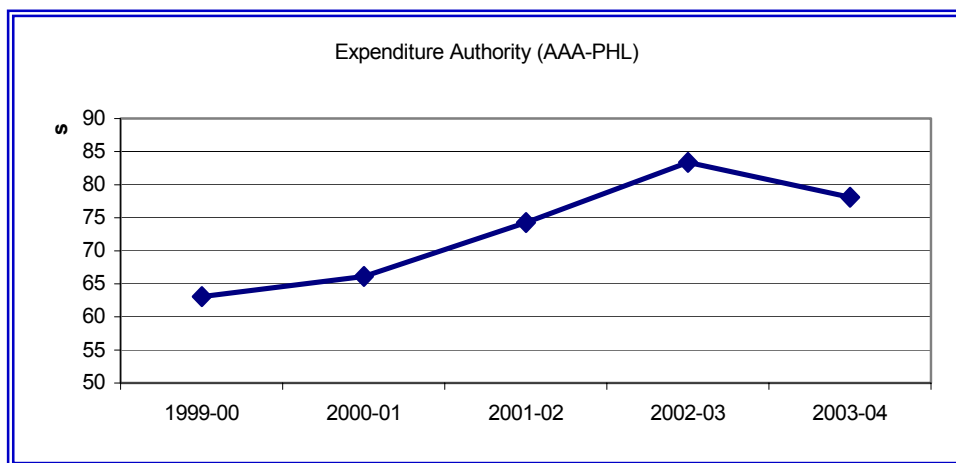
To prevent the spread of disease by carriers like mosquitoes, flies, and rodents, the Vector Control Program conducts constant monitoring, surveillance and control activities. The spread of West Nile Virus in birds and mosquitoes throughout much of the United States, now including San Bernardino County, is expected to result in human cases of this disease and to challenge our vector control capabilities throughout the County in 2004. The Vector Control staff works closely with the Epidemiology staff to investigate any human West Nile Virus cases to prevent further disease.

The Animal Care and Control Program protects the public from rabies through mass vaccination of the County pet dog population, stray animal abatement (through enforcement of the Leash Law), wild life rabies surveillance, quarantine of biting animals, laboratory examination of animals for rabies, and public education. In addition, the program investigates animal complaints, and provides safe sheltering care, return, adoption or, as a last resort, the humane euthanasia of unwanted animals.

## **Budget Information**

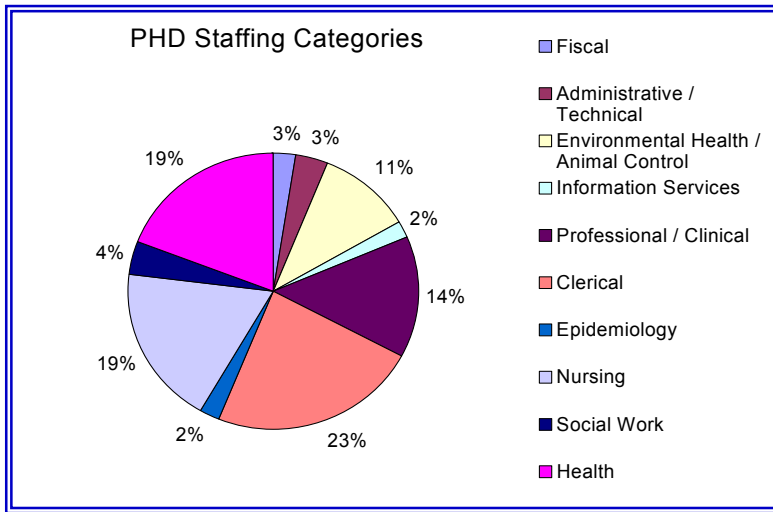
Public Health is dealing with a contracting budget for the first time in years. In conjunction with integration into the Human Services System (HSS), the department experienced rapid growth during the late 1990s and early 2000s as cooperative agreements with other HSS departments led to an expansion of services. In the 2002-03 year, state

budget cuts and rising caseload costs in mandated social services programs resulted in mid-year decreases and elimination of many of these agreements. The full-year impacts of these changes resulted in the 2003-04 expenditure authority within the department declining by 6.3%, from approximately \$83.4 million to \$78.1 million.



Looking ahead it is clear that the department will have to seek new funding streams and use existing resources more efficiently to maintain current levels of service delivery. Uncertainties surrounding sales tax and vehicle license fee revenue will be pressing budgetary issues going forward. These revenue sources fund about 18% of the department's operations and are also used as matching funds to draw down other state and federal funding.

## Staffing Information



Public Health employs over 1,000 staff in disciplines ranging from fiscal, clerical, and information services to medical and social work. Almost 33% of the department's employees are clinical staff (doctors, nurses, therapists, laboratory staff) and 23% are health educators, health services assistants, and social workers. Eleven percent of the department's employees work in environmental health and animal control activities.

